

The Electric Mercury

U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, July 2000

**For more on these and other important stories, see July 2000 printed issue of *The Mercury*.
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.**

Peake takes command

MG James B. Peake became acting commander of Medical Command during a ceremony June 9 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The former infantry officer and West Point graduate replaced LTG Ronald R. Blanck, who retired from active duty June 30. Peake was named acting commander pending nomination and Senate confirmation of Blanck's permanent replacement as MEDCOM commander and Army Surgeon General. (After *The Mercury* went to press, it was announced that Peake had been nominated to become the new Army Surgeon General and MEDCOM commander.) For the past three years Peake has served as commander of the AMEDD Center and School and Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

MEDCOM recognizes top troops of 2000

SPC David Laraibarra is Medical Command's Soldier of the Year for 2000, and SGT Kenrick D. Forrester is NCO of the Year. Laraibarra is a medical specialist at Brooke Army Medical Center. Forrester is a pharmacy technician at Fort Riley, Kan., MEDDAC.

Soldiers, NCOs compete for annual honors

In a supplement to the article announcing the MEDCOM Soldier and NCO of the Year, *The Mercury* profiles the other 17 candidates, all of whom were winners in regional or subordinate-command soldier/NCO of the year competition.

Pharmacies emphasize patient safety

People often complain about slow service in pharmacies, but there is more at stake than getting pills issued fast. To ensure patient safety, it is also vital to dispense medications accurately. The second installment in *The Mercury's* series on Quality Medicine explores steps that military pharmacies are taking to improve service and safety, with a sidebar on how patients can help. An accompanying article offers statistics showing how the quality of military medicine compares favorably with civilian medicine.

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Other important stories in the July *Mercury* include:

- MG Marianne Mathewson-Chapman pins on second star, becoming first female major general in Army National Guard. She holds an IMA (individual mobilization augmentee) position as Deputy Army Surgeon General/National Guard.
- Two National Guard medical leaders win MacArthur Leadership Awards: CPT Daniel R. Waters, commander, Detachment 1, 717th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), Reno, Nev., and CPT Spencer T. Price, surgeon, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, Albany, Ga.
- Army's drive to fill divisions to 100 percent of authorized strength will not impact Army Medicine much, since division medical slots are always well-filled. But next year's goal to fill early-deploying corps units may cut strength at some MEDCOM facilities.
- New 84-bed hospital company concept passes 6-month series of field tests at Fort Carson, Colo. The 84-bed company, part of the Medical Reengineering Initiative, is substantially smaller than current combat support hospitals and is designed for much more rapid movement and deployment in emergency situations.
- First chapter of "Medics of the Coldest War," a series about Army Medicine in the Korean War, relates the shock, fear and pain of GIs thrown suddenly into the desperate early hours of a war that no one prepared for. Somehow, the troops held out long enough for reinforcements to arrive and the medics improvised a lifesaving response to chaos.
- Walter Reed Army Medical Center biomedical engineering technician Anthony Trikilis describes experiences in Antarctica. Taking leave from Walter Reed, he spent a month organizing the biomedical resources of the Antarctic research bases and creating a computerized biomedical-equipment tracking system for scientists to use in the future.
- CPT Alfred Hamilton, Fort Hood, Texas, MEDDAC; SSG Jeffrey M. Zak, DoD Military Working Dog Veterinary Service, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas; and Alice W. Sheplar, Fort Stewart, Ga., MEDDAC, are honored as the Army Medical Department's Information Management Officer, Soldier and Civilian of the Year.
- Photo shows AMEDD historian William Addison in Normandy, dressed in World War II medic garb, briefing 30th Medical Brigade leaders on the D-Day landings.
- Knowledge is best weapon against sexually transmitted diseases, argues article from Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine. The article answers five key questions about STDs and lists addresses of websites offering further information.
- Commentary by Wendy Lumbardy on the stresses that disturb soldiers and their families just before and just after deployment separations and how families can cope.
- Letters to the editor on dengue fever, dental equipment and operating-room procedure.